cranes, patrol vehicles are provided in completed sections to provide immediate relief to road users.

Poor condition of Highways/roads leading to religious centres

1890. SHRI E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the poor condition of the highways/roads leading to the various important religious centres of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps that are being taken by Government to improve the condition of these highways/roads so that no inconvenience is caused to the pilgrims visiting them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) The Union Government is responsible for development and maintenance of only National Highways. The National Highways connecting to the religious centres are maintained in traffic worthy condition within the available resources.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Government has taken up the development of National Highways under the programme of National Highways Development Project Phase-III (NHDP-III). One of the criteria for inclusion of the sections of National Highways in NHDP Phase-III is providing connectivity to the important pilgrimage/religious centres. Accordingly, some sections of National Highways that are passing close to pilgrimage/religious centres have been identified for inclusion under this scheme. State Governments can submit proposals for improvement of the State roads connecting such centres to National Highways from the State's share of Central Road Fund.